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Race, Space, and the Reinvention of Latin America in Mexican Chicago

by
Nicholas De Genova

While fashionable but facile invocations of transnationalism and globalization have proliferated in recent academic discourse, scant attention has been paid to the more radical implications of these new socio-spatial formations. This article will adopt a critical transnational perspective derived from my ethnographic research among Mexican/migrant¹ workers in Chicago to dislodge some of the dominant spatial ideologies that undergird a prevailing "common sense" about the United States and Latin America. Through the lens of what I would like to call "Mexican Chicago," and revisiting some of the crucial presuppositions of Chicano studies, I will suggest a critical reevaluation of the conceptual foundations of "Latin America" as it has conventionally been construed as an object of spatial knowledge for Latin American studies in the United States—which is really to say, from the epistemological standpoint of U.S. imperialism. To state the problem more generally, I want to render an orthodox spatial "knowledge" more accountable to a regime of spatial power and inequality, and this transformed conceptualization of Latin America will enable—and require—a rethinking of the space of the U.S. nation-state itself. Thus, this article will also seek to revise some of the principal concerns at stake in the project of Chicano studies, motivated by

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a concomitant responsibility to Latin America. Furthermore, I will try to elucidate the ways in which the spatial topography of the Americas is intrinsically racialized and involves a continuous work of reracialization that is manifest in the dialectical articulations of global processes with the localities where the global takes place. Chicago will serve as a pivot that can orient the agonistic (typically centrifugal) triangulation of Latin American studies, Chicano studies, and the rather less cohesive field concerned in some way or another with the United States that is regrettably glossed as American studies. From the critical standpoint of a *Mexican* Chicago (one that belongs to Latin America), I want to suggest a critical theory of transnationalism from below that can reckon with U.S. imperialism and its conceits by interrogating some of the constructions of “race” and “space” that intersect in the imagining and enforcement of the boundaries of the U.S. nation-state. For this it will be necessary to defamiliarize the nation-state’s artifice and artifacts even as we remain confined by them.

LOCATING THE SUBJECT: MEXICAN CHICAGO

The relationship between Mexico and the United States has its origins in a history of invasion and conquest, warfare and subjugation, exploitation and oppression. It is possible (indeed, productive) to comprehend this history as one of unstable frontiers and violable boundaries, as one where space is not merely contiguous but colonized and, hence, coterminous. It is well known that what is now the Southwestern United States was annexed from Mexico in 1848 for the westward expansion of the U.S. nation-state. After U.S. troops occupied Mexico City itself, Mexico ceded roughly half of its national territory (corresponding in area to Germany and France combined). Approximately 80,000 Mexicans summarily became U.S. citizens. A new border was abruptly established along the Río Bravo/Río Grande to separate territories and a population that had not previously been divided. Indeed, a founding premise of Chicano studies is the recognition that “we didn’t cross the border; the border crossed us” (Acuña, 1996: 109).² The rehearsal of this history is a prerequisite for any responsible account of Mexican migration to the United States. Scholarship that takes Mexican immigration as its object without starting here reduces Mexican migration to just another immigrant stream and tacitly participates in the erasure of a distinct (racialized) historicity and the historical claims that the Chicano studies project alone has emphasized. From this vantage point, the westward extension of the United States—itsself predicated upon relentless international conflict as well as a formidable

export of capital—laid the foundations for a distinctly transnational history that cannot be adequately represented and should not be smugly subsumed by the imperial-national chauvinism frequently operative in American studies or its subsidiary “ethnic” studies.³ We can afford neither the credulity nor the duplicity of speaking of U.S. imperialism only in the past tense. The present and future existence of the United States is predicated and possible only on the basis of renewed conquest and continuous domination.⁴

The United States all too easily assumes the form of a pre-given, stable, and enduring truth in the present and comes dangerously close to an unexamined, naturalized, and normative presupposition.⁵ Rather than presume the fixity and integrity of the U.S. nation-state, I would like to emphasize its constitutive restlessness (Taussig, 1992). It is in this sense that I want to introduce the proposition of a Mexican Chicago—confined within the boundaries of the U.S. nation-state but also a site for their production. And here, by emphasizing the *production* of these boundaries, I want to suggest that Chicago becomes a site of their *contingency*.

When I invoke a Mexican Chicago, what I am addressing is something more significant than the mere presence in Chicago of Mexican people—somehow considered to be “out of place,” in effect, outside of their “natural habitat.” However my research might be described, it is decidedly *not* about “displaced persons” floating in some purported “postmodern hyper-space”;⁶ nor is it about “immigrants” if that category is understood in its conventionally teleological sense. In the former configuration, Mexican migrants never quite arrive and establish themselves in the United States in any substantive, meaningful sense; in the latter, it is presumed that there could be no other possible end for them than to settle permanently. In one case, in a virtual world of their own, their feet never seem to touch the ground; in the other, in the promised land at last, they might as well get down on their knees to kiss the ground. The thematic of continuity and disjuncture is usually mapped onto the migrants themselves; either as outcasts or as assimilators they come to represent a condition of displacement that reinscribes the stability and security of separate places. Instead, I want to emphasize the production of a conjunctural space with transformative repercussions in all directions (Lefebvre, 1991[1974]). In the spirit of Guillermo Gómez-Peña’s appeal for “a new cartography . . . to interpret the world-in-crisis” (1993: 43) and his recognition that “there are Latin Americas outside of Latin America” (Fusco, 1995: 163) and Michael Kearney’s and Roger Bartra’s concurrence that “Latin America does not end at the U.S. border” (Bartra, 1993: 11; cf. Kearney, 1991: 68), I want to assert, when I advance the idea of Mexican Chicago, that something about Chicago itself has become elusive, even irretrievable, for the U.S. nation-state, and I want to insist upon the admission of

Chicago to its proper place within Latin America. This conceptual move, I want to emphasize, ought not be misconstrued to operate within a nationalistic binarism that would then purport to render Chicago somehow retrievable in turn for the Mexican nation-state; such a zero-sum proposition would be counterproductive and fanciful in the extreme. Indeed, earlier formulations—such as José Vasconcelos's *México de afuera*, an “outer Mexico”, or a Mexico outside of itself (cf. Skirius, 1976), or Américo Paredes's “Greater Mexico”—have reinscribed precisely such a binary juxtaposition of nation-state space. Rather, when I posit a Chicago that belongs to Latin America, the force of my intervention is directed against the epistemological stability of the U.S. nation-state as a presupposition. The “Mexican” in Mexican Chicago, however, pertains not to the Mexican nation-state or to any presumed essential Mexicanness but to the particular social situation of Mexican-origin migrant laborers, for which “Mexican” (in my formulation) serves as shorthand but through which the salience of “Mexican”—for these migrants—itself comes to be reconfigured. I will begin by trying to situate the social specificities of this Mexican Chicago within the wider relationship between the United States and Mexico, the consideration of which (within the United States) is itself conventionally subsumed under the rubric of Latin American studies.

Latin American studies in the United States—indeed, virtually all institutionalized area-studies programs—owe their epistemological formulation and (most important) their original material endowments and legitimation to a particular historical moment in the ascendant hegemony of U.S. imperialism, after World War II (Berger, 1995; McCaughey, 1984; Nader, 1997; Wallerstein, 1997).⁷ There is no dearth of explicit commentary in the conference proceedings of the period bemoaning the lack of expertise and general ignorance prevailing in the United States with regard to geopolitical areas of “strategic importance to the national interest.”⁸ Although some early antecedents of Latin American studies emerged during the prewar years of Franklin Roosevelt's Good Neighbor Policy, the real boom came only after the Cuban Revolution (Berger, 1995). Despite the critical political engagement and explicit anti-imperialism that have often distinguished scholars in Latin American studies in the U.S. academy (cf. Bray, 1992; Chilcote, 1997), it is necessary to adopt this understanding of the imperialist epistemology that frames Latin American studies to establish a starting point that makes possible certain operative premises.

The most crucial of these preliminary considerations is a recognition of the fact that something called “Latin American studies” (in the United States) was historically conceptualized and is inherently comprehensible as constituting knowledge about a geopolitical region that is *outside* of the physical

space of the continental United States—outside of the contiguous 48 states. Latin American studies was created as a way of knowing that is *positioned from within* the seemingly stable confines of the U.S. nation-state. Chicago could never have been conventionally conceived to belong to Latin America, plainly enough, because Chicago is located *inside* of “America”—that is, the United States of (non-Latin) America. A second premise, following upon the first, is that the U.S. nation-state has enforced a national identity whose imagined community is imagined to be linguistically homogeneous: the United States has been manufactured historically to be English-speaking (Simpson, 1986; Liebowitz, 1984). Here, in the work of homogenizing the United States, everything south of the continental United States must also be homogenized—as “Latin” or Latino—despite the fact that many languages without Latin antecedents are represented among the populations included in the region called “Latin America.” What has been definitive of “Latin America” is not any positive proposition (linguistic or otherwise) about that vast region of the globe but rather that the United States is *not* “Latin” and that Latin America is something else. More to the point, as Gómez-Peña puts it, “For the North American . . . the border is where the Third World begins” (Fusco, 1995: 148-149). From the imperial epistemological standpoint of Latin American studies in the United States, the “Latin” label is meaningful—fundamentally—as a marker of Latin America’s essential otherness. Hence, a third premise: the difference between the United States and its imperial object, Latin America, is also a thoroughly *racialized* construction of difference. Historically, the hegemony in the United States of a ruling class descended from northwestern Europe (predominantly Anglo-Saxon) has involved the continuous task of *producing* a national “majority” racialized as “white” against other subordinated segments of the working classes variously racialized as something else (Allen, 1994; Horsman, 1981; Ignatiev, 1995; Roediger, 1991; 1994; Saxton, 1990; Takaki, 1979). “Whiteness” is not a fact of nature; it is a fact of white supremacy. Thus, the U.S. nation-state’s laborious efforts at homogenization entail an ideological manufacture of national identity and citizenship, inherently racialized as white. These constructions are never separable from the actual heterogeneity to which those efforts are directed, and, more important, they are part of a dialectic in which homogenization is likewise inseparable from the production of difference and the regimentation and subordination of the heterogeneity so produced (Gupta and Ferguson, 1992: 16).

The historical consolidation of racist hegemony in the United States (which has involved a continuous making and remaking of whiteness) is inseparable from the history of the westward colonization of the North American continent in the making of the United States. One central feature of

that colonial history, of course, was the imperialist war against Mexico, which secured for the expanding United States the vast territory that would come to be called the Southwest and summarily colonized a preexisting Mexican population that would thereafter be subjected to multiple clearly racialized forms of displacement, disenfranchisement, exploitation, and oppression. Expressing the colonialist racism that embellished this Mexican episode in the history of U.S. expansion, one participant on the Santa Fe expedition declared, "There are no people on the continent of America, whether civilized or uncivilized, with one or two exceptions, more miserable in condition or despicable in morals than the mongrel race inhabiting New Mexico" (quoted in Horsman, 1981: 212). The "national" difference between the United States and Mexico has been, in effect, racialized from its inception. Furthermore, the intrinsic significance for all of Latin America implied by this racist imperialism toward Mexico is well exemplified by the following invective, published in the *Illinois State Register* in June 1846: "The Mexicans . . . are reptiles in the path of progressive democracy—who, with his bigboots on, is bound to travel from Portland to Patagonia—and they must either crawl or be crushed" (quoted in Horsman, 1981: 236). Indeed, predictably, Mexico has been recurrently construed as the threshold between the United States nation-state and Latin America. Likewise, over the course of U.S. history, the racial denigration of the Mexican people has had repercussions in both directions—both inward and outward; the formations and transformations of white supremacy, at home and abroad, have been mutually constitutive.

With this interrogation of the "Latin America" construct I hope to have begun to open up an intellectual space in which to interrogate the common sense of U.S. imperialism, which predicates the integrity of the U.S. nation-state itself and cherishes an otherwise naturalized notion of Latin America as somehow "out there"—a logic that dictates that Chicago could not possibly be considered to belong, in some meaningful way, to Mexico. As I have suggested, there is an extensive and prestigious body of anti-imperialist scholarship in Latin American studies, but it is exceedingly uncommon to find the relationship between the United States and Mexican nation-states problematized in terms of the kind of anti-imperialist historicism available in the Chicano perspective, which exposes and interrogates the United States's "national" claims to territories that it invaded, conquered, and colonized as a prelude to its career of empire building throughout the rest of Latin America.⁹ Even outstanding works (e.g., Katz, 1981) devoted to the history of U.S. military intervention and imperialist diplomacy during the Mexican Revolution (not so far removed chronologically from the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo) tend to leave intact the stable juxtaposition of two territory-based nation-

states for which “national” space is entirely dehistoricized. In this sense, the imperialistic conceptual foundations of Latin American studies have so thoroughly fixed the limits of knowledge that even the more responsible scholarship tends to reinscribe and naturalize the border between the United States and Mexico.

While I have emphasized the anti-imperialist historicism of Chicano studies in my critique of the presuppositions of Latin American studies, it now becomes imperative to examine the limitations intrinsic to the conventional conceptualization of the Chicano studies project itself. If a Mexican Chicago violates the constitutive premises of Latin American studies, it also presents a dilemma for Chicano studies. Although there would appear to be a neat and convenient division of intellectual labor between the two, as defined incidentally by an orientation to the north or south of the border, such a simplistic partitioning would elide entirely the distinct history of Chicano studies as a *political* project and, moreover, would merely settle for a restoration of the spatialized and racialized “national” difference between the United States and Mexico that I want to problematize.

The intellectual formulation and academic institutionalization of Chicano studies in the late 1960s and early 1970s were inseparable from the radical politicization and avowed activism of the Chicano movement across the Southwest, especially in California (Muñoz, 1989). One of the hallmarks of that movement was its bold confrontation with the racial oppression intrinsic to the Chicano experience. Rejecting the dominant mythology of the “melting pot” and its inherent assimilationism, the Chicano movement commonly cultivated a nationalist sensibility and frequently articulated a separatism based on a theory of the Chicano Southwest as an internal colony (Barrera, 1979; Barrera, Muñoz, and Ornelas, 1972), culminating in a program of national liberation that reclaimed the Southwest and renamed it Aztlán (cf. Anaya and Lomelí, 1991: 205-218).

Chicago has never enjoyed an easy or secure place in the dreaming of the Chicano homeland Aztlán, and consequently Chicago’s relationship to Chicano studies remains a complicated one.¹⁰ The seeming incommensurability of Chicago with the mythic image of Aztlán resides precisely in the tension between Mexican Chicago’s origins in 20th-century migrations and the indigenous claims of a more conventional Chicano nationalism distinguished by a territorial orientation to the occupied, colonized Mexican lands that have come to be called the Southwest. Most Chicano scholarship consciously explores themes related to Mexican experiences in the so-called Southwest, and rhetorical emphasis is placed on the historical priority and multigenerational longevity of Chicanos in that region. Chicago has been almost invisible—or in any case, rather incidental—in most Chicano scholarship and

literature as well.¹¹ This tension between Mexican Chicago and conventional understandings of what is a proper or authentic place for Chicano concerns can provide an instructive standpoint of critique from which we might begin to pose questions about the present and future complications of Chicano studies. These questions have already been anticipated by some preliminary gestures toward a reconceptualization of the paradigm. Following Sergio Elizondo's plea for a more metaphorical and mobile understanding of the concept of Aztlán (1991: 217), it would be possible to stretch the concept of Aztlán to wherever Mexican people migrate. Similarly, following Gloria Anzaldúa's evocation of the border as "an open wound" where "two worlds [merge] to form a third country" (1987: 2-3) or Rudolfo Anaya's proposition that "Aztlán can become the nation that mediates between Anglo-America and Latin America" (1991: 241), it would be possible to subscribe to still more metaphysical renovations of Chicano nationalism. But it may be necessary to rethink the mythic narrative of Aztlán altogether to retool the impulse that has driven the Chicano studies project for the more complicated and bewildering social configuration that increasingly interweaves Mexico and the United States today and transcends the traditional terrain of the Chicano Southwest.¹²

Much of the Chicano studies scholarship and literature has taken as a principal concern the experiences of U.S.-born, U.S.-raised "Chicanos," with a more subdued and somewhat ambivalent interest in Mexican migration per se.¹³ Historical scholarship in particular is the branch of Chicano studies that has readily included migrants from Mexico in depictions of the Chicano people/nation. This inclusive gesture is especially viable when these representations emphasize the condition of racialization that is the common plight of Mexican migrants and U.S.-born Chicanos (a condition prioritized through the use of *la raza* as a preferred nomenclature). Yet, the sociocultural distinction persists (along with all the incongruities and conflicts implied by that distinction) and raises the analytical question where *lo mexicano* ends and *lo chicano* begins. One tendency (most favored by historians, seeking to represent a coherent polity) might hold that this transition occurs as soon as *mexicanos* cross the border; the other (perhaps more literary) option would focus instead upon the implicit and seemingly inevitable rupture between those same Mexican migrants and the "Chicano" children they raise in a foreign land. The first notion imputes a quasi-magical transformative power to the border; the second imagines Mexican migrants to be doubly condemned, both as permanently displaced persons and as inescapably estranged from their own children. My concern here is that these conceptions rest upon a common premise—a radical disjuncture and irreducible difference between the United States and Mexico. In other words, no matter how we might define

"Chicano," the foundational premise of Chicano studies seems to take for granted the solidness and fixity (in the present) of the United States as such, which is really to say that it presupposes the U.S. nation-state.

My concern here is simply to question the ways in which Chicano studies—as a mode of inquiry and an intellectual project as well as a standpoint of critique and a position for political action—has been confined within the boundaries of the U.S. nation-state. "Ironically," Guillermo Gómez-Peña points out, "the conservative Anglo-Americans who are witnessing with panic the irreversible borderization of the United States tend to agree with Chicano and Mexican separatists who claim to speak from the left. . . . The three parties would like to see the border closed. Their intransigent views are based on the modernist premise that identity and culture are closed systems, and that the less these systems change, the more 'authentic' they are" (1993: 47). As I have pointed out repeatedly, Chicano studies is founded upon a recognition of the imperialist and racist character of the westward expansion of the United States and the social and political inequality that has defined the historical experience of most Chicanos. The explicitly antiracist, antiassimilationist politics of Chicano studies has long provided a welcome alternative to the type of "ethnic" saga that might otherwise be construed as "Mexican-American" in the idiom of either American studies or ethnic studies.¹⁴ Furthermore, Chicano studies embodied a bold effort at self-representation not only against cultural invisibility, marginalization, and criminalization in the United States (see Blea, 1988; Gómez-Quíñones, 1982; Madrid-Barela, 1973b; Mirandé, 1985; Montiel, 1970; Rocco, 1976; Romano, 1968; 1970; Vaca, 1970a; 1970b) but also against the elitist class biases and Eurocentric cultural and racial chauvinism of earlier Mexican intellectuals' accounts of Chicano "inauthenticity"¹⁵ (see Fusco, 1995: 105, 161-162; Limón, 1989; Madrid-Barela, 1973a; Ybarra-Frausto, 1992). There is certainly a vital and well-established necessity for the kinds of research enabled by the Chicano studies paradigm (García, 1986). But in the final analysis, the exclusive concern of Chicano studies resides within the United States, in a way that is analogous to the preoccupation of Latin American studies with that which resides outside of it. What I want to examine is how the transnationalization of Mexican labor, which is at the heart of the production of a Mexican Chicago, requires us to reconsider the territorial confinements of both these perspectives. Having thus far postulated the conceptual possibility and the critical promise of this Mexican Chicago, I now want to circle in toward a closer appraisal of what Mexican Chicago is (or in any case, might be) by way of a brief (still prefatory) consideration of what it is not.

To invoke a Mexican Chicago is not at all to invent an island or any other kind of discrete village-like space merely situated in the "context" of the

wider city. That is the ethnographic never-never-land of anthropological and sociological fairy tales: a mythic place of essentialized and homogeneous "culture" in an inevitably naturalized and isomorphic relationship to its bounded spatial location. The Chicago School of sociology (led by Robert Park and Ernest Burgess) devised an urban sociology that explicitly sought to emulate the ethnographic techniques of Boasian (primitivist) anthropology, coupled with a purportedly "ecological" perspective, approaching "the city" as a singular, universal, evolutionary and natural fact. "The city" (which ordinarily meant Chicago) was variously described as "the natural habitat of civilized man," "an organism," "a product of nature, and particularly of human nature," but also as "a complex of distinct social worlds which touch but never completely penetrate, each with its own scheme of life, separated by distances which are not geographical but social," "a natural segregation of individuals on the basis of their interests and attitudes," and "a natural distribution of cultural isolation, social disorganization, delinquency, perversion and vice."¹⁶ This conceptual framework served above all else to naturalize the spatial configurations of social inequality that are the hallmark of capitalist urbanism. It is not at all difficult to discern here a pioneering groundwork for much of the "knowledge" produced by hegemonic sociology in the United States throughout the 20th century, a prolegomena for a certain sociological common sense in American studies. Predictably, immigrants (and their ghettos) occupied a prominent (albeit inglorious) place in this sociology's ethnographic representations, and the problematic of assimilation loomed large (see Wirth, 1928; Zorbaugh, 1929). The conflicting productions of urban space seemed to vanish, and what remained was "the city as a social laboratory" (Park, 1929), where controlled experiments could define an "empirical politics" directed at controlling the "disorganization" and "pathologies" of immigrants and others who diverged from the presumed "mainstream of American life." Indeed, the crucial place of "the immigrant" as a category in American studies has been almost seamlessly inscribed by representational strategies that inevitably bifurcate between assimilation and social "pathology" (i.e., a perceived failure at or rejection of assimilation). Reproducing the presuppositions of the Chicago School, the subdisciplinary intellectual ghetto known as "urban anthropology" typically involved something like a traditionally conceived "island" ethnography that simply happened to be conducted in an urban context (see Hannerz, 1980: 3; Sanjek, 1990). Following its sociological antecedents, urban anthropology likewise combined the functionalist illusion of discrete, synchronic, essential, bounded "cultures" with the evolutionist tautology of modernization theory that temporalized urban spaces only by dehistoricizing them within the developmental paradigm of a "rural-urban continuum" (see Cohn, 1987: 27).¹⁷ The conceptual

progeny of these premises included such regrettable inventions as “urban villagers,” “peasants in the city,” “men of two worlds,” and the infamous but intractable “culture of poverty” thesis. The city, treated merely as a complex aggregate of naturalized sociocultural processes, was thereby reduced to a “context”—virtual background noise against which more familiar, holistic, “cultural” units could be “put in their place” and isolated for ethnographic objectification.

Mexican Chicago is not so localized as to readily permit such fantasies; the physical coordinates of its innumerable localities are much more elusive. Moreover, Mexican Chicago is not reducible to any location as such. In effect, Mexican Chicago’s relationship to a more generic Chicago is analogous to Chicago’s relationship to Latin America; both defy the segregationist’s metaphysics of flat cartographic modes of knowing so dear to the programmatic paradigms of anthropology and area studies alike (see Malkki, 1992). Chicago cannot be understood as a mere “context” assumed to provide a singular and unified field where social life happens to take place, and Mexican migrants in Chicago cannot be enclosed within an encompassed space of homogenized cultural isolation—not even in the several neighborhoods that are almost exclusively Mexican. Instead, Chicago as urban space is itself continuously *produced* and *reproduced* through the contradictions of struggles in which Mexican migrants are centrally implicated—struggles over the city, for and against the city, with the city much more than struggles simply *in* the city—where Mexican communities themselves can be constituted not in isolation but indeed only in the midst of social conflict. “Space’s investment—the production of space—has nothing incidental about it,” argues Henri Lefebvre. “It is a matter of life and death” (1991 [1974]: 417).

A Mexican Chicago emerges; it begins to be possible to discern its rough outline. Mexican migration to Chicago actively reworks and reproduces social space, such that Chicago and Mexico are implicated by one another. What I intend here is not the old-fashioned anthropological conceit about the essential irreducibility of “culture” (for instance, among Mexican people in Chicago). Theoretical arguments aside, this essentialist conceit can come dangerously close to the long-standing racist position in U.S. immigration politics and popular prejudice that Mexicans are “unassimilable” into the alleged “mainstream of American life.” Moreover, overly sanguine accounts of the transnationalism of Mexican migration too easily run this same risk of appearing to recapitulate these time-worn, intrinsically racist representations of Mexican migrants as sojourning “homing pigeons.”¹⁸ I will not, however, flatter U.S. imperialism by recapitulating its own presumptuous modernization narrative, whereby anyone who migrates from the Third World is simply seeking the precious opportunity to settle and pledge allegiance to the flag.¹⁹

or the more jaded postmodernization narrative (tempered by a creeping dread of the waning of high imperial prosperity), whereby everyone in the Third World is effectively one more barbarian at the gates, merely a potential “illegal alien” hoping to collect welfare at the expense of U.S. citizens. The whole problematic devised around categorizations of immigrants as either “sojourners” or “settlers” is one in which the spatial conceits of the nation-state prevail. In contrast, I argue that the everyday-life practices of migrant workers produce a living space in Chicago that conjoins it irreversibly to Mexico and render it irretrievable for the U.S. nation-state. There could not possibly exist within Chicago an idyllic “Mexican” cultural space conceived as somehow independent of the profound social inequality and violence of U.S. capitalism. A Chicago that belongs to Mexico, a Chicago that can be claimed for Latin America, clearly does not cease to be confined within the domain of the United States, but it is significant that the U.S. nation-state and U.S. imperialism are contradicted at the very core—“in the heartland”—in Chicago.

TRANSNATIONALISM GOES TO WORK . . . IN CHICAGO

The need of a constantly expanding market for its products chases the bourgeoisie over the whole surface of the globe. It must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connections everywhere. The bourgeoisie has through its exploitation of the world market given a cosmopolitan character to production and consumption in every country. . . . National one-sidedness and narrowness become more and more impossible. . . .

—Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels
(1967[1847]: 83-84)

Capital by its nature drives beyond every spatial barrier. Thus, the creation of the physical conditions of exchange—of the means of communication and transport—the annihilation of space by time—becomes an extraordinary necessity for it.

—Karl Marx (1973[1858]: 524)

National one-sidedness and narrowness are indeed impossible (although they surely continue to provide a last refuge for a motley assortment of scoundrels and fools); furthermore, the perpetual annihilation of space, which Marx identified long ago, is ever more crucial for the ways that we must think—for the very ways that we can even begin to think—about social life. Of course, the master narratives of capital are not the only ways in which our

world is continuously reinscribed, and so it is necessary to try to understand something of the complex and heterogeneous human experiences that provide the subordinated stories that run dialectically parallel to the main currents of annihilation. But it is irresponsible to talk about transnationalism unless one begins with a recognition of the imperialist world divisions of labor that perpetuate ever-widening gulfs of inequality among nation-states—whose borders are typically and rigorously enforced and whose internal labor markets are commonly policed through outright terror. Transnationalism, as I would like to employ the term, must exist in some *working* relation to imperialism.

While Marx long ago delineated the globalizing character of capital, the term “globalization” has acquired a new distinction in the wake of the unprecedented upsurge and dramatic diversification of foreign direct capital investments over the past 25 years. “Globalization” plainly serves as a euphemism for the accelerated and diversified export of capital on a global scale that marks the most recent reconfigurations and rearticulations of an imperialist world order—an unmistakable and unprecedented transnationalization of capital, a transnationalism, so to speak, from above. Transnationalism, as specified for the purposes of anthropological inquiry, involves the ways in which the macroeconomic and state-driven political processes that annihilate space and destabilize national boundaries have contributed to the proliferation of sociocultural interactions of a new order and an unprecedented intensity, to a great extent because of radically expanded and relatively accessible means of communication and transport (see Appadurai, 1990; 1991; 1996; Basch, Glick Schiller, and Szanton Blanc, 1994; Glick Schiller, Basch, and Szanton Blanc, 1992; Kearney, 1991; Rouse, 1991; 1992). My interest here is to sharpen the critical perspective made possible by discourses of transnationalism by way of an emphasis on the transnationalization of labor and the racialized class politics of globalization—to advance, as it were, a transnationalism from below.²⁰ Transnational labor migration is the premier form of a more restless, human side of the accelerated processes of globalization. As capital has burrowed into every nook of the world in the making of an ever more globalized marketplace and the continuous reconsolidation of an imperialist division of labor, one of the commodities that is exchanged, necessarily and inevitably, is labor-power—homogenized, abstract, highly mobile (indeed, *migratory*) labor. But the migratory movement of homogenized, abstract labor is embodied in the restless life and death of concrete labor—which is to say, in this case, actual Mexican/migrant workers.

There is a special character to Mexican migration to the United States: it has provided U.S. capitalism with the only immigrant labor reserve that is sufficiently flexible and tractable that it can never be fully replaced or

completely excluded (Cockcroft, 1986). The 1911 Dillingham Immigration Commission spoke plainly of the U.S. nation-state's position on Mexican migrant labor: "While they are not easily assimilated, this is of no very great importance as long as most of them return to their native land. In the case of the Mexican, he is less desirable as a citizen than as a laborer" (quoted in Calavita, 1992: 180). This is still very much the fundamental perspective that informs the militarized politics of border patrol, which is designed not so much to halt undocumented migration from Mexico as to control the flow like a faucet while it intensifies the exploitability of the undocumented laborers who must exist in a sustained condition of legal vulnerability (Cockcroft, 1986; Kearney, 1991). And it is the same sentiment that has informed ongoing campaigns (instigated by California's Proposition 187 and then escalated by President Clinton's Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996) to deny rudimentary civil rights to undocumented immigrants and their children alike.²¹ An increasingly hostile and intransigent atmosphere for undocumented immigrants' children does not so much deter labor migration as *aim* to deter (or, in any event, restrict) family migration and settlement, so that "most of them return to their native land." In the imagining and enforcement of the U.S. nation-state and its boundaries, Mexicans in particular are considered "undesirables" and "outlaws"—even as their labor meets a critical need for important sectors of U.S. capitalism.

Chicago was a privileged site in the historical development of North American capitalism and as such was always linked to the colonization of the North American continent by U.S. imperialism (Cronon, 1991; Mayer and Wade, 1969). Moreover, as a major industrial center, Chicago has long been a premier destination for labor migrations. As the United States's quintessential railroad metropolis during the 19th century and the early decades of the 20th (Cronon, 1991: 83), Chicago quickly became an important (one might say inevitable) destination for Mexican migrant labor, the early patterns of which corresponded to the expansion of railroads (Massey et al., 1987). The Mexican population in Chicago first achieved notable size during World War I and has been growing almost continuously ever since (Año Nuevo Kerr, 1976: 69-77).²² Chicago's Mexican population increased by nearly 40 percent in the decade of the 1980s alone and is the second-largest concentration of Mexican/Chicano settlement in the country today, numbering well over half a million in the metropolitan area and over 15 percent of the population within the city limits.

In the early 20th century, enclaves of Mexican migrants first developed near railroad yards, stockyards, meat-packing plants, and steel mills, where they were employed principally as strike-breakers and temporary (reserve-army) labor recruited deliberately on racial grounds (Taylor, 1932: 117; cf.

Acuña, 1981: 130-131; Año Nuevo Kerr, 1976: 25-26). Today these same enclaves have dramatically expanded into largely migrant Mexican working-class neighborhoods, although the stockyards and packing houses closed decades ago and the railroads and steel are virtually moribund industries that no longer absorb much newly arrived migrant labor. This paradox underscores the fact that Chicago has been an increasingly prominent destination for Mexican migrant labor in the United States even as the total population of the city has declined in the wake of a dramatic loss of jobs in manufacturing (Betancur, Cordova, and Torres, 1993; cf. Squires et al., 1987: 23-60). Mexicans and Chicanos in Chicago continue to be concentrated in "low-skill" occupations, with roughly half holding jobs as industrial operatives, fabricators, and other types of manual laborers. (Only 6.4 percent of the Mexican/Chicano workforce in Chicago hold managerial or professional positions.)²³ Mexicans in Chicago are more than twice as likely to be factory workers as whites or African Americans, which again helps to underscore the fact that Mexican migrants constitute an ever more important segment of the working class in general in metropolitan Chicago, specifically incorporated into an ever more central place at the "deskilled" industrial core of capitalist production.²⁴

But today more than ever, because of the particularly transnational character of Mexican migration, Mexican people in Chicago are frequently able, through numerous technologies and considerable human connections, to maintain active social relations across vast physical distances. This can only mean that proletarian class formation itself must begin to be understood to be complicated in new ways by transnational social processes. In one very common and familiar configuration, the U.S.-dollar wages of Mexican/migrant workers in Chicago are remitted to the agrarian villages of rural Mexico and provide crucial material sustenance to ways of life defined by subsistence farming and small-scale commerce.²⁵ These remittances not only provide needed support to the immediate families of migrants (e.g., in building homes, buying land or livestock, or capitalizing small businesses) but also finance public works projects (in conjunction with state funds and voluntary local labor), build churches, sponsor festivals, and develop soccer stadiums, and sometimes provide material aid to victims of a variety of social calamities, not the least of which is the violence of local state apparatuses (e.g., in Guerrero). In this respect, the preponderantly proletarian composition of Mexican Chicago is undeniably and irreducibly enmeshed (albeit to varying degrees) in the practical present and the imagined futures of countless agrarian communities across the Mexican countryside. And likewise, the innumerable local concerns of rural Mexico have a palpable presence in the everyday lives of migrant workers in Chicago. While the reciprocal ideological

dichotomies between “the city” and “the country” and between wage labor and peasant subsistence may proliferate, the practical realities become entangled in unprecedented ways.

The incorporation of Mexican/migrant labor into low-wage jobs in both the downgraded manufacturing and the expanded service sector is one hallmark of Chicago’s agonistic accession to the status of “global city” (see Sassen, 1984; 1988; 1989; 1994). Of course, Chicago was already a relatively “global” city, albeit of a different order in a different epoch; its manufacturing industries supplied commodities across the world even in the 19th century. More important, given radically shifting criteria Chicago is perhaps less “global” now than it once was (King, 1990). Its newly globalized reconfiguration is agonistic in the sense that it is decidedly partial—still too much an industrial city in the convulsive throes of deindustrialization, not quite living up to the standards of glittering globalization that would ensure it a place on the world map of the 21st century. Yet, one distinctive feature of Chicago in the era of globalization is that if it is not exactly a “world city” it has certainly become a Mexican city through the entrenchment of transnationalized labor and migrant workers’ improvisational productions of locality (Appadurai, 1995; cf. Sassen, 1996b). It bears repeating that this is not to pretend that other Chicagos have been somehow eclipsed but rather to emphasize a differential space that has developed in their midst. Following Lefebvre’s characterization of space as “whole and broken . . . at one and the same time” (1991[1974]: 356), I have posited a pluralization of urban space that identifies globalization processes as capable of violent disjunctures and creative ferments, both disproportionately felt among the poorest people. It is likewise from this vantage point, through the critical lens of a transnationalism from below, that it becomes possible to discern in Chicago as global city one of its most salient forms, Mexican Chicago.

RACIALIZATION IN A GLOBAL CITY AND THE GLOBALIZATION OF RACISM

The transnationalism of labor migration under the conditions of radical inequality that are synonymous with global capitalism is meaningful beyond its contradictory consequences for class formation among Mexicans themselves. Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson have argued persuasively for a rejection of conventional presumptions of an isomorphic connection between “culture” and “place” and a natural disconnection and autonomy of spaces. They proceed from the premise that spaces have always been interconnected hierarchically. “If we question a pre-given world of separate and

discrete 'peoples and cultures,' " they argue, "and see instead a difference-producing set of relations, we turn from a project of juxtaposing pre-existing differences to one of exploring the construction of differences in historical process" (1992: 16). From this perspective, Mexican/migrant workers not only go to work in capitalist production but also are embroiled in the production of difference—and, I would emphasize, *racialized* difference—within specific local configurations of capitalist hegemony as well as transnationally, across a global capitalist topography of domination. Of necessity, this production of difference requires the production of a space for that difference, a space defined in and through difference.

Here, against the more commonplace, one-sided fascination with what transnationalism is doing to subvert or (at least) unsettle prior configurations of social order, I want to stress the inevitably dialectical character of the articulation that transpires between the forces of globalization and established structures of social inequality. In a programmatic essay on race and working-class history in the United States, David Roediger concludes: "To explore how, whatever their racism, American workers made class-conscious choices within the parameters open to them, is of undoubted importance. To explore how racism shaped those parameters is also profitable. To join both concerns, or to realize that they are joined in a tragic history, is one of the key areas of unfinished business for the new labor history" (1994: 34). I want to extend this argument about the writing of history into both the writing and the organizing of working-class history as it is being made in the present. To do so, however, involves not only recognizing racism as a central problem of working-class consciousness and action *within* the United States but also attending to the laborious work of racialization—the production of racialized difference—in the everyday regimentation of working-class life as it is situated at the specific local cross-sections of an ever more transnational division of labor. The production of a Mexican Chicago, then, is inextricable from the racialized production of Chicago's Mexicans.

Mexican/migrant experiences in Chicago involve a multiplicity of difference-producing encounters and struggles over space. As Lefebvre points out, "The city and the urban sphere are . . . the setting of struggle; they are also, however, the stakes of that struggle" (1991[1974]: 386). Chicago is renowned as a "city of neighborhoods," and by no mere coincidence it is also notorious for its racial segregation. Indeed, Chicago's neighborhoods are often remarkably distinctive and identifiable for a very durable reason: they are commonly surrounded by material boundaries. The railroads and factories that played such a defining role in the genesis of Chicago entail enormous physical enactments of capital on the urban landscape. This is the capitalist built environment that hegemonic sociology has mystified as "ecology."

Working-class communities were relegated to whatever space was left for residential use, amid the industrial developments and the crisscrossing of elevated railroads that literally wall in whole sections of the city. These physical barriers have provided a very effective material foundation for social and especially racial segregation. The incorporation of a burgeoning Mexican/migrant population into Chicago's social patchwork has meant that the insertion of Mexicans (and Latinos, in general) into the racial divide between white and Black is also spatialized. In the most prominent examples, Mexican neighborhoods throughout Chicago occupy interstitial zones between African American neighborhoods and the receding neighborhoods of the white working class.²⁶ The large-scale, neighborhood-by-neighborhood evacuation of the city by whites known as "white flight" dramatically accelerated after the African American rebellion of 1968 that followed the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. At that time, 97 percent of the nonwhites in Chicago were African Americans; Latinos still represented a relatively negligible proportion of the city's population. But it was precisely at that conjuncture that Mexican migration to Chicago began to rapidly increase, and Mexican migrants often found available to them exactly those panicked white working-class neighborhoods that shared boundaries with Black working-class neighborhoods, inevitably poorer. Since 1968, "Mexican" has become an ever more pronounced third term in the racial order of Chicago.

The African American rebellion of the 1960s provides a crucial historical dimension that is often neglected in the narratives of globalization in relation to the deindustrialization of large urban centers in the United States.²⁷ The transformations of the world economy that became manifest in the early 1970s cannot be understood simply in economic terms, as they were immediately preceded by political upheavals, both at home and abroad, that acutely impacted U.S. imperialism in particular. More important, the devastation of the industrial foundations of big cities in the United States needs to be recognized not as an unforeseen consequence of blind economic forces but rather as an aggressive policy of disinvestment that had a disproportionate effect on Black America. It is precisely in this social climate that Mexican (frequently undocumented) migration to Chicago came to serve the new labor requirements of small- and middle-scale employers who could not afford simply to pick up and leave the city (or relocated only to suburban areas), would not tolerate the militancy of African American workers, and needed a cheap and (legally) vulnerable alternative.²⁸ Thus, the insertion of Mexican migrants into the bottom ranks of a racially polarized working class served as a transnational fix for a political crisis of labor subordination within the U.S. nation-state and heralded the enforcement of an austerity regime for all workers in the United States that would more closely correspond to the conditions

of the global labor market. But what is worth emphasizing is that globalization is not merely a juggernaut that destroys everything in its path but articulates—in the course of its own localization—with local configurations of social division and political conflict that are elaborated through the regimentation of space and the production of difference.

Ultimately, these experiences of the regimentation of urban space and labor-force segmentation are constitutive in a larger process of reracialization at work in the formation of a Mexican Chicago. Despite the multiple “cultural” inflections of the confrontations and conflicts in this production of difference, I characterize this process as racialization to clarify that it is principally a matter of social inequality and subordination. Likewise, inserted into a preexisting polarity of white and black in the racist order of capitalist hegemony in the United States, Mexican migrants’ understandings of their own “cultural” identities themselves have become thoroughly saturated with ideologies of racial difference. While plainly conscious of and commonly outspoken about the racialized discrimination and injustice that confront them (including of course the existence of a special police force—the Border Patrol—devoted almost exclusively to their repression), Mexican migrants nonetheless frequently are interpolated by the hegemonic racism of the United States against the African Americans who often appear to be their most palpable competition in the scramble for jobs and space. In this sense also, Mexican migrants in Chicago are very commonly moored ideologically to a contradictory intermediary space between white and Black and produce collective understandings of themselves that are preeminently racialized.

I call this process a *reracialization* because there is an obvious and important racialization that has already been accomplished in Mexico prior to migration (which is at least analytically distinct as Mexican). But it is imperative to emphasize here that this process of reracialization is itself transnational in its repercussions. The transnational migration that helps to ensnare Mexico and the United States in an irreversible, mutually constitutive condition engenders an unrelenting circulation not only of money, commodities, and human beings but also of ideology, especially the ideologies of racial difference that lie at the core of working-class experience in the United States. While much of this racial ideology is continually (re)elaborated in Chicago, its consequences are evidenced in seemingly remote Mexican villages and, because of the rural-urban migration *within* Mexico that is often associated with transnational migration, in places like Mexico City as well. In short, on the basis of preliminary research in Mexico²⁹ I would contend that Mexico’s distinct and relatively fluid racial order may be currently undergoing a profound ideological reelaboration that reflects and refracts the racialized migrant encounter and increasingly shares some of the rigidity of the

dominant racial ideologies of the United States. The reracialization of Mexican migrants in the United States is no less transnational than Mexican migrant labor itself, and thus apparently local productions of difference are also globalized and entail a reinscription of the racialized difference between the United States and Mexico even as the two are conjoined more extensively than ever before. As migration experiences permeate the innumerable communities in Mexico in which migrants continue to participate and as migrant “knowledge” comes to reshape the worldviews even of people who have never migrated, it becomes ever more difficult to disentangle what can be properly attributed to a social history purported to be Mexican and what to another that is said to be that of the United States. In this light the production of a Mexican Chicago evokes not only the contingency of the space of the U.S. nation-state but also one manifestation of a laborious process whereby what is at stake is nothing less than the reinvention of Latin America itself.

CONCLUSION

If I have produced only a preliminary rendering of Mexican Chicago in this article, I hope nevertheless to have made a programmatic gesture toward the necessity of its recognition and to have at least begun to chart the principal contours of its space. Through the critical lens of Mexican Chicago, it is increasingly difficult to imagine that Latin America begins only at the border and increasingly necessary to discern the racialized boundaries of the space of the U.S. nation-state imploded deep within its territorial map. The boundaries between the United States and Mexico are ever more confounded and convulsed by transnational migration. At the same time, however, migration processes are continually embroiled in a relentless production and regimentation of racialized difference that make possible the ultimate reimagining and enforcement of these same boundaries. The boundary lines have less to do with the border itself than with the textures of everyday life for Mexican workers in the United States. The border is everywhere—constantly reinscribing the social position of Mexican migrants in the United States as that of “illegal” outsiders, racialized others, whose singular role is to provide cheap and tractable labor. Their racialization is plainly inseparable from their subordination as workers. And it is this production of difference that inevitably entails the production of a differential space—the production of a Mexican Chicago, a Chicago that belongs to Latin America even as it is at work in the reinvention of Latin America.

My argument for Mexican Chicago is situated at the center of a triangulation of Latin American, Chicano, and American studies, divergent academic

discourses that have long appeared to be firmly grounded by seemingly self-evident territorial moorings. In an effort to disrupt the subsumption of "the immigrant" into the conventional narratives of hegemonic sociology in the United States and to subvert the imperial-national chauvinism by which American studies presumes to know its object, I posit a Mexican Chicago as the locus for an interrogation of the space of the U.S. nation-state itself. A critical transnationalism that could render Mexican Chicago intelligible is one that can comprehend a production of differential space while never losing sight of its entanglement in a more intense production of difference, exposing the work of racialization in the subordination of labor. Inasmuch as Mexican Chicago lies beyond the reach of the territorial nationalism that has informed the historical claims of Chicano studies, I have sought to revise the anti-imperialist historicism of that paradigm to advance an explicitly anti-imperialist theorization of transnationalism that situates Mexican Chicago in Latin America, beyond the reach of the U.S. nation-state even while it is nuzzled dangerously close to its core.

NOTES

1. The category "migrant" should not be conflated with the more precise term "migratory"; rather, it is intended to serve as a category of analysis that disrupts the implicit teleology of the more conventional term "immigrant." Thus, by "Mexican/migrant" I mean someone who has migrated from Mexico to the United States (whom I happen to have known in Chicago) in contradistinction to those who were born or at least raised in the United States. Among those whom I designate Mexican/migrant there is a remarkable heterogeneity of experiences ranging from seasonal migration to long-term settlement and from undocumented status to U.S. citizenship. Despite this heterogeneity, the terms "Mexican American" and "Chicano/a" have virtually no currency for self-identification; the pervasive category is "Mexicano/a."

2. This sensibility can be traced throughout Chicano studies scholarship (e.g., Acuña, 1981; Almaguer, 1994; Barrera, 1979; Montejano, 1987; Muñoz, 1989)."

3. Davis (1990), Desmond and Domínguez (1996), and May (1996) have registered various critical perspectives on the profession of American studies from their respective standpoints within it; all of these assessments have been published in *American Quarterly*, the journal of the American Studies Association.

4. An explicit consideration of "empire" in American studies long remained the domain of a relatively small number of revisionist historians such as William Appleman Williams (1959; 1961; 1980). Cultural studies of U.S. imperialism have emerged only very slowly and rather recently (Drinnon, 1980; Kaplan and Pease, 1993; Mackenthun, 1997; Slotkin, 1985; 1992; cf. Mackenthun, 1996); while this development is laudatory, it has remained principally literary in focus and thus largely oriented to the past, although there are some exceptions (e.g., Kennedy, 1996).

5. Cf. Fernando Coronil's (1996) suggestive reading of Nicos Poulantzas concerning the fetishization of geography.

6. The phrase is Fredric Jameson's, as adopted by Roger Rouse (1991: 8).

7. My personal understanding of this history has been greatly enriched through numerous conversations with Barney Cohn (see Cohn, 1987[1980]; Cohn and Chatterjee, n.d.).

8. Wagley (1964) is merely one interesting example of what is probably a whole genre of academic production; it compiles a report and seminar papers for the Social Science Research Council and the American Council of Learned Societies.

9. David Maciel provides one instance in which the Chicano anti-imperialist perspective frames the narration of a Mexican history (from the standpoint of Mexico)—namely, the history of the Mexican working class: “The basic premise of the study is the unity of the Mexican working class on the two sides of the Río Bravo. It is the same history of oppression by imperialism and colonialism of certain sectors of the United States” (1981: 10).

10. The specific recognition of Chicago as a theoretical (and not merely empirical) question for Chicano studies has been anticipated (albeit in only a preliminary fashion) by Sergio Elizondo (1991), although the conceptual limitations of the Southwestern regional paradigm were addressed much earlier in *Aztlán: International Journal of Chicano Studies Research* in its special issue on Chicanos in the Midwest (Summer 1976); see the issue’s introduction by Gilbert Cardenas (1976).

11. The most prominent literary exceptions are Ana Castillo (1994) and Sandra Cisneros (1986).

12. José David Saldívar, in the effort “to articulate a new, trans-geographical conception of American culture” (1991: xi), makes an analogous argument in favor of reconceptualizing Chicano cultural studies.

13. See Madrid-Barela (1976) for an attempt to produce a genealogy for the term “Chicano” revealing that, despite contemporary connotations, the term originally referred to migrants.

14. For an excellent interrogation of the perfidy of “ethnic” narratives in hegemonic sociology in the United States, see Stephen Steinberg (1989); see also Pease-Chock (1991) for an account of how testimonial narratives about “illegal aliens” are appropriated for hegemonic myth making about “ethnic” success.

15. The most notorious of these is Octavio Paz’s rendering of “*The Pachuco and Other Extremes*” (1961).

16. These formulations (and their derivatives) recur with remarkable regularity throughout the work of the Chicago School. Compilations of their classic statements include Park and Burgess (1925), Short (1971), Smith and White (1929), and Wirth (1964).

17. Cohn’s critical remarks are directed toward the work of Robert Redfield (1950; 1956).

18. This is a danger addressed by Leo Chavez (1994) in his critique of the work of Roger Rouse.

19. This presumed inevitability is a danger implicit in Chavez’s early arguments (1991; 1992) about the incorporation and settlement of undocumented Latino immigrants, driven by the teleological analogy of “rites of passage” in the life cycles of individuals. Similarly, Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo’s otherwise rich ethnography (1994) remains circumscribed by this problem insofar as it takes “settlement” as its defining presupposition. Although he is likewise interested in “making sense of settlement,” Rouse (1992) provides a more nuanced account that explicitly seeks to disrupt this teleological common sense. Likewise, in his anthropological history of settlement by a particular migrant community, Robert Alvarez Jr. (1987) retrospectively accounts for settlement in the counterteleological terms of a transborder regional perspective.

20. Saskia Sassen (1996a) raises similar questions about the formation of new claims to citizenship and rights to place—“the new politics made possible by globalization”—with an emphasis on the constitutive role of immigration. Likewise, Rouse (1995) has begun to develop a provocative argument that emphasizes the national/transnational dialectic in the configuration of exploitation, domination, and hegemony within the United States.

21. As a prelude to what will likely become a more concerted campaign to disenfranchise the U.S.-born children of undocumented immigrants of their birthright citizenship, Schuck and Smith (1985) have already advanced the argument that citizenship should be determined by a more active expression of majoritarian "consent."

22. The principal exception to this general trend (in Chicago as elsewhere) was the Great Depression era, which brought about a systematic exclusion of both Mexican migrants and Mexican Americans (i.e., U.S. citizens) from employment and economic relief, followed by the forcible deportation of 415,000 Mexicans as well as Mexican Americans and the "voluntary" repatriation of 85,000 more (Massey et al., 1987: 42; cf. Acuña, 1981: 136-154; Hoffman, 1974).

23. Data from the 1990 U.S. Census have been analyzed by the Latino Institute, Chicago.

24. An analogous case can clearly also be made for Los Angeles (Acuña, 1996: 175-208; cf. Bacon, 1996).

25. Michael Kearney (1996) provides an excellent assessment of the transformations and ultimate eclipse of "peasant" communities.

26. This has also begun to happen on a larger scale in the Mexicanization of an inner ring of industrial, traditionally white working-class suburbs that form a buffer between the city and more affluent suburbs.

27. Massey and Denton (1993) and Wilson (1987; 1996) are prominent examples of this omission in hegemonic sociological accounts of the "concentration of black poverty."

28. Characteristic of hegemonic sociology is Waldinger's (1996) depoliticized account of labor-market competition between African Americans and recent immigrants in postindustrial New York City, which obfuscates the operations of racism through an entirely naturalized model of "ethnic-niche" formation.

29. I refer specifically to time spent in 1992 in metropolitan Mexico City (among working people originally from rural areas in Guerrero, Morelos, Michoacán, and Puebla) and visits to a small town in rural Morelos that has been deeply involved in migration to Chicago. Given the theoretical priorities of this article, I am unable to devote more attention to these experiences here.

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